

LETTER

FROM

MR. TOD, *Merchant.*

TO

DOCTOR M'FARLAN, *Minister.*

REVEREND SIR,

AS nothing but your want of proper information of facts, made me presume to publish my Observations on your learned and laboured Inquiries concerning the State of the Poor, wherein I professed my personal regard to you, and approved of what you advanced concerning the English charities; I did not imagine, as we were both pursuing one good end, that the arguments I was obliged to use in defence of our Hospitals and Poor-houses, would have given so much offence to one, whose character I at that time so much esteemed.

If you had answered my Observations, and convinced me, or any other, that my sentiments were wrong, illiberal, or that the facts were not fairly stated, I should have with candour acknowledged my error; but, to get my whole Observations reprobated to the public, through the channel, of a Review, the publishers of which, without any interest or application to them, honoured me with the highest encomiums on my former publications,—that they should now be instigated to throw such public ridicule on my reputation and profession of business by subtle adversaries, is truly mortifying. Had you confined your virulence within the circle of your own little party-connections, they alone would have enjoyed your secret resentment, and exulted in that reproach, which ever attends the presumption of those, who offer to touch a pompous ecclesiastical character.

But the liberal and candid must look on the abuse as singular, when they see that the principal accusations against

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me, are, that I was concerned in the manufactory of tanning and currying, and therefore the perusal of my writings, must be a *pennance* on learned Doctors, to whose province alone subjects of latitude belong ; and all others who attempt to write on them, especially those who are concerned in mechanics, must be at constant variance with themselves, grammar, and common sense, and should not presume to meddle with a pen, but keep to the instruments of their mean professions ; while the elegance, learning, propriety, and usefulness of learned Doctors' Inquiries, or those who are concerned in their composition, are repeated in Reviews, as being perfect and unanswerable.

That you, or any of your Reverend or party-friends, may not convey wrong information to that channel of criticism, on these strictures now sent you, published in prose and verse for the benefit of the Orphans, which you probably mean to suppress, and that you may not again *nibble* at my character, I beg you will undergo the *pennance* of reading an account of my rise and progress in life, so as to furnish you and them, with many accumulated crimes, to render my presumption the more ridiculous.

Know then, Reverend Doctor ! at my first outset, having a religious turn, which I hope will ever remain, my mind was divided whether I should be a minister or a merchant, for either of which, I obtained a liberal education ; but having a mechanical and picturesque genius, my friends got me advised to try the jeweller, when books and literature appearing to me more valuable than precious stones, the continued application to them soon made me quit that employment, while the dazzling lustre of gold and riches, tempted me to drop my studies for the Church, and embrace the Mercantile line ; but finding this place too narrow for my extensive views of trade, I went abroad ; and after being a considerable time in different counting-houses, both in Holland and England, I returned to Scotland, and, with great success, followed various branches of merchandize for many years, before I degraded myself by joining in copartnery with a friend, who carried on the manufactory of tanning and currying,

currying, which I brought to higher perfection, and in which I dealt to greater extent, than ever had been done in this country.

Having then the same opinion of the commercial interest of Britain, which appeared in my Observations, from page 59 to page 65, to be very different from your sentiments on that subject, where I maintained that manufactures are the foundation of all trade and agriculture ; I greedily embraced every opportunity of being concerned in such manufactures as appeared capable of improvement, and where numbers of hands could be usefully employed. For which purposes, I demeaned myself by becoming a rope and sail maker, a boot and shoemaker, a Skinner and furrier, a cooper and fishmonger, a brazier and coppersmith, a weaver and linen-draper, with many other branches of manufactures, in which I dealt very extensively ; and, to add to the indignity of my character, I employed some thousands of people in spinning yarn from the flax which I imported.

And as a merchant, I had for many years large concerns, in no less than fourteen ships at one time, some of which were employed in government service, and others in exporting to foreign parts, the dirty manufactures which now furnish matter for so much ridicule and contempt.

To add to all these enormities, I was the largest hop and oilman in Scotland ; nay, I was a tallow-chandler, grocer, dry-salter, woollen-draper, stationer, haberdasher, and for some time past, I have commenced farmer, planter, and rural improver. But what I now esteem as the greatest dignity of my life, is the station which impowers me to assist in rearing up so many friendless youth, which would naturally be my greatest delight, were it not for certain persons, who, from party-prejudice, clog the wheels on which Hospitals should rise, and sully the pleasure which is due to those who pay attention to them.

From this short abridgment of the history of my life, you will observe, that I have never allowed myself to eat the bread of idleness, nor acted like a self-important drone in the great and busy hive of human society. And, for the

encouragement of the rising generation, I can safely say,

" From youth to age, the more I was employ'd,

" The greater health and pleasure I enjoy'd."

Nor do I think there are many in this country, who have been more active, have made more use of the pen in accounts and literary correspondence, or have been blessed with greater success in business.

However the vanity of proud and pompous men, ignorant of their country's welfare, may imagine these stations of life inferior to others, who busy their minds with matters of less importance to society, I shall ever beg to differ from them in opinion, and shall not be ashamed to declare my sentiments, on what may be beneficial to the public; Though my former occupations, or style of writing, may furnish matter for criticism to those who are better acquainted with trifling dispute, than the real interest of the nation.

If Dean Swift was of opinion, that he who increased one blade of grass to his country, did more good than a politician, they who assist in the enlargement of trade and manufacture, who support the old, rear up the young, and, as far as lies within their narrow sphere, promote public improvements, are surely more valuable members of the community, than any number of speculative politicians, or casuistical logicians, who, instead of promoting virtue, often disturb the peace and good order of society.

And now, in the evening of life, when retiring from the bustle of business, wishing to promote the cause of religion, which, I humbly apprehend, consists more in advancing the interests of society, than in any outward professions of sanctity. And however others may differ from my sentiments in protecting the old, and educating and raising friendless youth, the principles of religion and gratitude call on me to support those who may have aided in making my fortune, and the feelings of humanity, as well as natural affection to infant innocence, command my particular attention to their indigent offspring.

After forty-two years experience in Trade and Manufacture, because I published different sentiments on that important subject, and in defence of the public charities of this

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place, from an author who moved in another sphere of life, and could only learn facts from information, which I endeavoured to make appear were not well founded,—to meet with so much virulence, from those who preach the same doctrines on charity which I publish, *is truly mortifying*, and must be looked on by the eye of the candid, as proceeding from a spirit of persecution, which, if joined with higher sacerdotal power, would proceed to more dangerous exertions.

It is with pleasure I look back on so long a period, and consider the variety of dealings, which I have transacted with so many thousands of my fellow-mortals, with whom I never had an equivocal, or unfair transaction, nor ever went to law, or cruelly distressed a debtor. Such reflections fill my mind with no little satisfaction; and the more so, that the affection and gratitude of those with whom I dealt, make them regret my giving up a business so successful, and by which, so many different people were profitably employed;—nor do I believe I have an enemy on earth, excepting a few by whose professions of religion, my conduct in life should gain esteem.

I wish to be grateful for the favours which Heaven has bestowed on me, from my infancy. But if Providence hath appointed, that the bitter poison of calumny and reproach is to mix in my cup at the evening of life, I must be resigned, and believe “Whatever is right.” Yet I cannot help regretting, that the springs from whence that venom flows, to corrupt many adjacent streams, and by subtle windings, is conveyed to distant rivers, which circulate all around, while the source of bitterness lies concealed, under the cloak of sanctified duplicity.

However conscious I am that my intentions are upright, and my conduct with regard to them unblameable, it would be disingenuous to pretend that I despise the virulence of the meanest of men. Reputation is sacred, estimable, pleasant and necessary, while travelling among strangers through the journey of life, and ought to be guarded. Therefore, if my character is calumniated by the most insignificant, they shall not pass with impunity. See my sentiments on the proper love of fame, in the *Account of the Orphan Hospital*, p. 36.

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But if the child of your fancy is to fight with my reputation, along with the interest of the friendless children, whom Providence hath placed under my protection, you must excuse my losing temper, and natural inclination to justify my conduct in life, which has been attacked with so much public ridicule, and insidious contempt. And however you may have been the means of what others have maliciously reported, that I am inimical to Reverend ministers, and Godly people; There are no gentlemen with whom I am more personally connected, nor whose characters I more venerate and esteem, than Clergymen of candour, whose practice correspond with their professions; and I ever did, and ever will regard and love pious and worthy Christians, whatever their creed or mode of worship may be, if their truth and moral conduct in life, are equal to their outward profession, and are not carried away by the shadows of religion, to follow the mean designs of party-faction, which often prompt the leaders of it to act below the dignity of their character, and at same time laugh at the good peoples simplicity.

I need not picture to you the deformity of party-faction, (which, in my present publication, I have made to appear in its proper colours). After hearing your sentiments of it, a long time since, in the General Assembly, when you publicly declared it to be the greatest bane of society, and professed yourself to be of no party; if you are still of the same opinion, and your candour is equal to your profession, the poor Orphans will be in no danger from you, as you must have observed that the nature of that disease is to blind the eyes of the weak and well-meaning, darken the minds of the intelligent, and often prompt them to act an inconsistent part in society. And those who are possessed of it, always endeavour to frustrate the noblest schemes, if they are not intirely conducted by their party.

It is ever founded on pride, and never fostered by the great, the good and intelligent, but by the vain sons of meanness and duplicity; who, by other means more than their own real merit, advance to higher stations than their talents can bear, and pushes them to aspire to an arrogant superiority.

ty over every society that has the misfortune to be troubled with them.

But that delicacy which is due to religion, and to worthy characters, who practise what they profess, for whom I have the highest esteem, prohibits particular reflections on some false professors, and makes it dangerous to expose them ; as combatants fighting in a crowd, may hurt the weak and unwary : But if those whose characters will not stand a Review so well as the injured, and are greater friends to party-faction, than to the welfare of the Orphans ; Should they persist in hurting their interest, it will be serving society to make them appear in their proper colours,—even from a CRUMBIE, to his best friends and mighty supporters.

I am not so much afraid of their hurting my reputation, as the real interest of that Hospital, which I acknowledge to be my hobby-horse, and which I will feed and nourish, to carry me with ease and pleasure, while I am able to ride through my evening journey of life—“ In spite of faction’s arbitrary sway,”—or of those who flily convey to London a very strange character of me and my Observations ; Whoever they were, they are capable of the meanest practices to accomplish their resentment ; as I never will allow myself to believe, from the character of some of these gentlemen who write the Reviews, that they could have been capable of publishing so singular a criticism, not so much on a book published two years ago, in defence of Hospitals and Poor-houses, as on the personal character of one, to whose former strictures they had given so much applause ; nor would they have done so, had it not been dictated by some, who had a more particular connection with the composition of the Inquiries.

Why were they so long in furnishing materials for these strange anecdotes, or allow them to mention that there was no price affixed to the Observations ? Can there be any thing more humble and candid in an author, than to refer the value of his publication to the readers, as they think it merits, or as the objects he means to serve require ? Or is it fair to make use of his humility, as an argument of pride or incapacity ? Whatever you have made by your Inquiries, I

can tell you, that the impression of my Observations is near all away, and they have brought to the poor Orphans twenty times more than I ever expected, besides the good intentions of many future favours by legacies to that Hospital; and this strange Review, instead of suppressing, would sell another edition.—*Thus doth Providence make good to arise out of evil.*

But were I to publish the numerous Reviews of the honourable, reverend, intelligent and respectable characters of both sexes, who have honoured me with their sentiments on my Observations, and at same time as a mark of their approbation, paid from one to ten guineas for single copies, it would be a sufficient consolation for the injury done to my character as an author, and would not a little amuse the public. And were I as fond of resentment, as those who preach against that vice, such publication would rather wither the laurels which have been so often busked about your brow, by those who may be more particularly concerned in your publication.

Stubborn facts, and the feelings of humanity, easily guide the pen of well-meaning authors; they need no Monitor to prompt or direct them, no casuistical Logician to wind their reasonings, or turn their periods, nor grammatical Pedants, to prune and polish their words, or stile of language. They speak to those hearts who feel their sincerity, and excuse their want of splendour, either in language or composition; But theories which flow from the vanity of authors, who imagine they have acquired a superiority of judgment over the general opinion of mankind, and the principles of religion, humanity, and common sense, though propped by the pillars of party, or dressed up in the richest habit, by quotations from pompous authors, so far as they are inconsistent with the first principles of virtue, the feelings of humanity, and the good of society, will ever sink to obscurity in the eye of the candid.

The humorous Review on my Observations, concludes with rather an unpolite familiarity with my name, and a counsel, or charge, as from the bar of a judge, or rather the

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pulpit of an *incensed* clergyman, commanding me never more to resume writing against the opinions of learned Doctors, especially against those whose strictures are so nearly related to one of the supreme judges of criticism, who can paint unknown characters to the other members of that court, in what colours he pleases, though the picture drawn by him or his friends, may appear to other eyes, very mean and unworthy of skilful painters.

I am commanded to keep by the currying knife; I shall not be so presumptuous as even to dictate to your Reverence; but I must beg with the greatest respect that is due to you as a clergyman, a gentleman of landed interest, and a pompous author, to give you my advice,—to keep by your profession of preaching, which will occupy your time and talents with more dignity to yourself, and usefulness to society, than writing on subjects which you are under the necessity of supporting by quotations from metaphysical philosophers, or reprobated authors.

But as a preacher of the Gospel, you will have the pleasure of supporting religion and virtue, from the highest authority of Scripture, reason, moral philosophy, and common sense, by which you will be in no danger of hurting society, losing character with the candid, or of being obliged to form parties to support your theories, however inconsistent with what they either preach or profess; and by moving in your own sphere as a clergyman, you will establish an uniformity of conduct; And those whose intentions are no ways mercenary, but to promote the good of society, will no more become obnoxious to you, or to those worthy characters, who are misled by party-faction. Nor will you be under the disagreeable necessity of prompting others, by ridicule, to diminish the characters of those who may differ from you in subjects of latitude, your sentiments of which, few more than your particular friends approve of.

While others are of opinion, that my Observations were the means of removing the prejudices of many against hospitals and poor houses, and of rescuing the characters of their Governors, Treasurers and Teachers from that dishonour

which your Inquiries threw upon them, as well as serving the begging, poor, and forlorn, whom you so much reprobated in a time of dearth and scarcity; And many of most respectable characters, who have viewed my Observations with different eyes, than has lately been done, are willing, if necessary, to allow their opinions of both them and your Inquiries to be published.

But I abhor paper combats, as I ever did American or civil wars, nor do I claim the title of a learned author, however desirous I am that my publications may answer their intention, which is to promote the interest of friendless youth; Against whom, if any party shall offer to combine, they may as well hurt the lion's whelp, or take a bear by the beard. In so good a cause, I freely deliver my sentiments to the public, in the best manner that occurs to my mind; And as a person without deformity will please most people in plain habit, better than if stiffly drest up in the richest attire by others; Neither can we add one cubit to our stature, nor more abilities to the understanding than what we have received. Though some are prompted by vanity to stretch on their tiptoes and overlook their superiors, or mount on the shoulders of party-faction, to suck in from the multitude, the breath of popular applause, and at the same time, condemn it in others as a criminal love of fame.

The Review finishes with the general character always given of books, which are sentenced to be reprobated, viz. That the author is at variance with himself, grammar, and common sense. There are many intelligent critics on your Inquiries, who are of opinion, that they, in a peculiar manner, deserve that character of being at variance with themselves, both in supporting the poor, and in the education of youth; and were it not the authors you quote to favour your sentiments, it would be difficult to know your opinion on the subject, whereas I am uniformly for cherishing the old, and educating and rearing up friendless youth.

As to grammar, in which I was once so great an adept, that on the death of an usher, I was appointed to teach the first class of a Latin grammar school, had I continued long in that

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station, I might have catched the disease of Pedant pride; and were I so mean as to turn Purse proud, which I shall ever despise, these two vanities, when conjoined, form the most dangerous and despicable character in human society,—*from which may Heaven deliver us!*

It may likewise be observed, that there was no want of consistency, grammar, or common sense, found in all my former publications. But if, since that time, I have become defective, the attention I pay to the mental or literary education of my poor brethren merchants daughters, in that Hospital, where you was long of opinion, that proper reading, writing, arithmetic, and construction unnecessary; I may soon revive my knowledge of the technical terms of grammar, where there are now many fine girls, who know construction as well as some grammatical pedants.

As to my being at variance with common sense, my Observations were submitted to Stubborn facts, and the natural feelings of Humanity, where common sense is mostly to be found; and by the success of the Pamphlet, it seems to meet with their approbation; nor will the virulent attack made on the character of the Author do any injury to him in the eye of the candid, nor to the Objects which they were intended to serve, in the hearts of the unbiassed and humane. But your Inquiries were addressed to those of *uncommon sense*, and you will best judge of their approbation, by the *uncommon sale* of your publication.

I therefore again beg that you will keep by your own profession of Preaching; and if that honourable occupation is as pleasant as it is profitable, you will pass your evening of life in that serenity, which I have endeavoured to describe in a poem on that subject, now sent you, p. 35. which employment, I humbly apprehend, you will find more honourable and agreeable, than in forming parties, courting allies, or raising batteries either offensive or defensive in a paper war with,

SIR,

Your most obedient servant,

T. TOD.

P. S.

P. S. In your future publications, if you lay down any scheme whereby to ease and refresh the old worn-out wheels of society, raise the sparkling genius of friendless youth, and spare the reputation of those who wish to assist in these duties of religion and humanity, I shall freely forgive all former injuries, and rejoice to be in peace and friendship with you, and all my fellow-mortals, especially the candid, the worthy, and well-meaning.

And as it is too late in life for me to enter into the rugged field of controversy, or thorny paths of deep dispute, especially where I may meet with those, who, like bullies in bruising, are pleased to thrust their heads into every combat where their dexterity may appear conspicuous; I therefore wish to retire to more agreeable scenes of peace and serenity, except I again meet with some unprovoked attempt against my character, or the interest of those who I am bound in duty and honour to support and protect.

T. T.



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